Fidel: Male, Age 19

Background Data

159 156 Fidel's case is that of a young man in the process of separating himself from his family, yet without any clear sense of where he wants to go. He has never [461] worked at any job, although he quit school in the 10th grade, when he was sixteen. [891] Except for 8 months residence in the San Francisco area with his family, and five school years spent in a Catholic boarding school, he has never lived away from the reservation. He is the third eldest of six children. He presently lives at [592] home, if the household which contains himself, his parents, and his younger sib- [434] lings may be called that. As an unmarried minor approaching maturity, his tribal income is administered by a trust officer who allocates to Fidel $110.00 monthly [657] for spending money. Additionally, Fidel sends bills for various expenses to the bank, which pays them. These arrangements have been in force for three years.

[733] Fidel's mother is a somewhat confused, defeated, semi-alcoholic who is very [582] reserved when sober and gay and promiscuous when drunk. His father is a Skagit [648] Indian who has for years been steadily employed as a cat skinner for a logging [221] company, which work keeps him away from home for months at a time. During the logging slack season, his father is only occasionally at home. He is usually away hunting or fishing. When he is at home he is frequently drunk, and when drunk characteristically assaults his wife and berates his children. The father does not contribute to the income, the up-keep, or the conduct of household [593] affairs. In recent years Fidel has defended his mother and the children from his father, on several occasions has driven him from the house, and on one occasion knocked him cold with a rifle butt. There is some doubt as to whether this per- [848] son is actually Fidel's father, the doubt being due to his mother's promiscuity, which is of long standing, and to Fidel's almost total rejection of him. Fidel's 159 relations with his father illustrate his marked and extensive ambivalence towards 156 most personal relationships. He will call him or refer to him as "father" or 593 "dad" and in the next breath "uncle," at one moment praise his skill at hunting, and the next deride him. Fidel cannot fully accept any relationship; he exhibits the same ambivalence towards his mother, his siblings, his closest friends, girls, and so on. Moreover, Fidel cannot undertake any course of action without doubt and reservations. He can neither love nor hate fully.

Fidel's family life is marked by a complete lack of cohesion, cooperation, common [421] activity, and common property. The major shared sentiment is an indifference to one another. Each member occupies a part of the house where he keeps his be- longings, and these are rarely shared. For example, Clifton once needed a rifle for a hunting trip. It was borrowed directly from the father; Fidel could not borrow it for him. A major source of difficulty is intra-family theft, which engenders violent reactions. The mother is psychologically divorced from the father, and strongly oriented towards her eldest, married daughter with whom she spends much time.

159 Fidel thinks of himself as a guide and skillful hunter, insofar as he thinks 156 of himself as anything. On several occasions he has been in trouble with the law, usually for drag racing or drinking when a minor. He spends his time [673] loafing about, watching TV, playing pool, fishing, hunting, visiting with his buddies, and sleeping. He is seldom in bed before 1 AM, and equally seldom [512] awake before two or three PM. His main ambition is to get out of the area, away from his family, and off by himself. He has thought about studying art, which may result from an identification with a friend who is doing so.